

## Lech Walesa calls for Marshall Plan for Poland

by William Jones

Lech Walesa, the leader of the Polish *Solidarność*, a man who has come to symbolize the fight for freedom now going on in Eastern Europe, arrived in the United States on Nov. 13 to mobilize economic aid for the development of Poland. Walesa came from Canada, where he had been warmly received, but had come away empty-handed, himself describing the Canadian response to his request for aid as equivalent to "offering a beautiful necktie to a corpse."

But it was not a simple Polish worker, arriving cap in hand, who made his appearance in Washington, but a singular representative of a great nation, proud of his nation's recent achievements, seeking a similar effort from this side of the Atlantic to help them in "reaching the shores of liberty." With his Old World grace, his self-effacing manner, and a seemingly endless supply of peasant witticisms to make his point, Walesa won the hearts of all who met him. The nation of Poland could not have found a more noble ambassador for presenting its case. And yet it still remains unanswered whether the United States will do more than offer "a beautiful necktie to a corpse."

From the moment he arrived in Montreal, Walesa and the other members of the Polish delegation were greeted by representatives of the Schiller Institute, who furnished them copies of Helga Zepp-LaRouche's statement "A Five-Point Program to Save Poland" (see *EIR*, Nov. 17, p. 6). In Washington, the delegation again received Mrs. LaRouche's program and a Polish translation of Lyndon LaRouche's statement on Poland. Throughout the course of the AFL-CIO convention—the AFL-CIO officially hosted Walesa—and elsewhere in Washington, members of the Schiller Institute were strategically placed with signs reading "Food for Poland, Freedom for Lyndon LaRouche," and the opening words of the Polish national anthem: "Poland has still not

perished whilst we live—Schiller Institute." Walesa nodded approvingly when he passed by one sign, which read, "Poland needs a debt moratorium," and waved.

### Poland 'chained hand and foot'

Walesa had obviously been briefed that there was little to be expected from the Bush administration in the way of economic assistance to Poland, and that he should concentrate instead on trying to interest businesses in investing in his embattled homeland. He did not repeat the urgency of the \$10 billion plan which he had presented to Bush during the President's trip to Poland last summer, explaining that there was a difference between "theoreticians" and "pragmatists." Instead, he said he was now seeking "new Columbuses" who were prepared to "go East" and invest in Poland.

Walesa left no illusions as to how critical the situation was becoming. "Nobody knows how much time we have left to reform our economy," he told the assembled trade unionists on Nov. 14, "but we all realize it is not much. If we fail to convince people that although things are changing slowly they are nevertheless changing for the better, then this breeze of freedom I spoke of will soon disappear, leaving behind only a sense of bitterness accompanying unaccomplished dreams. . . . Sometimes we feel as if we are swimming chained hand and foot," continued the *Solidarność* leader, "trying to summon all our energy just to make it safely to the shore. And on the shore there is a cheering crowd of people who offer us their admiration instead of simply throwing a life-belt."

In the cheering crowd was President George Bush, who, with Walesa present, addressed the AFL-CIO on Nov. 15. Bush was full of praise for Walesa and the winds of freedom in the East, saying that the administration was "shoulder to

shoulder with the Polish people." He made no new offers of aid, however, cutting a sorry figure in comparison to the West German government of Helmut Kohl, which had recently extended state-backed guarantees for a 3 billion deutsche-mark credit line to Warsaw.

Walesa made clear that Poland's economic problems are not of its own making. Referring to *Solidarność*, he said, "Of course, we have taken upon ourselves full responsibility for the country. There was no other choice. True enough, nobody with an ounce of common sense in him would be willing to take over a bankrupt enterprise in a hopeless condition, but what can one do if that enterprise happens to be one's own country? We could have said that we didn't ruin it and so we don't have to worry about its rebuilding. But it is we who have had to undertake this task, risking a lot in the process—an awful lot. We took over a country which was in a catastrophic state. The 40-year experiment with the Communist political system caused a devastation which is almost impossible to clear up." Referring to Poland's Western cultural roots, Walesa noted that "For those 40 years, Poland was separated from the road to which she had once belonged."

Later at a press conference in the convention hall and several times during the next few days, Walesa was questioned about German reunification, and asked if he did not feel uneasy in the face of a "greater Germany." Walesa responded that his country had paid a heavy price under both Hitler and Stalin. "I don't need to say how many people died because of these two. We must, however, do away with present anomalies." He characterized the separation of the two Germanies as "artificial," calling reunification "both possible and necessary." "We must see the reunification of Germany in the context of the changes going on in the whole of Europe," he said. "If economic integration is achieved, it will lead to political integration—not vice versa."

### **'Marshall Plan'**

Lech Walesa was the first foreign citizen not holding a government office to speak to a joint session of Congress since the Marquis de Lafayette in 1824. Minutes before his address on Nov. 15, the Senate tried to make a better showing than President Bush by approving \$738 million in economic aid to Poland and Hungary over the next three years, adding a paltry \$283 million to the paltry \$455 million in aid requested by the White House. The House, looking like a giant in a world of midgets, had called for \$840 million.

Walesa called for a new Marshall Plan for Poland. In a very passionate speech, Walesa referred to the Yalta agreements of 1945, an agreement formulated by the United States and Stalinist Russia for the immediate postwar condominium. Because of Yalta, Walesa explained, "there was imposed on Poland an alien system of government without precedent in Polish tradition, unaccepted by the nation, together with an alien economy, an alien law, an alien philosophy of

social relations . . . the atrocities were followed by persecutions of all those who dared think independently. All the pledges about free elections in Poland that were made in Yalta were broken," he reminded Congress. "Stalin forbade Poland to use aid provided by the Marshall Plan, the aid that was used by everyone in Western Europe, including countries which lost the war. . . . And now it is the moment when Eastern Europe awaits an investment of this kind—an investment in freedom, democracy and peace—an investment adequate to the greatness of the American nation. . . . We are not asking for charity, or expecting philanthropy." "But we would like to see our country treated as a partner and friend," said the Polish leader, perhaps meaning to remind the legislators of America's betrayal of his nation 45 years ago at Yalta.

### **Walesa rebuts anti-Semitism slander**

During a Nov. 16 press conference at the National Press Club, Walesa categorically rejected the slander that Poland is "anti-Semitic," an accusation that has been brought into vogue by the circles around Edgar Bronfman in connection with the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz. Walesa explained how there had been attempts to raise the specter of anti-Semitism in 1968 in order to divide the struggle of the Polish people. "Of course," said Walesa, "there are idiots saying stupid things everywhere—also in Poland." But traditionally, he stressed, Poland was one country where Polish Jews and Christians "lived together a long time as one country" to their mutual benefit. "We must stop all those today who try to play the political card of anti-Semitism," warned Walesa.

With regard to Gorbachov, he said that the developments in Eastern Europe were not due to Gorbachov. "Revolution was historically necessary because of the development of civilization. The system is broken. The changes are irreversible. No one can stop the flow of events," Walesa said.

In response to a question as to whether the Polish workers were prepared to accept unemployment, Walesa said that "Western and Eastern economies are incomparable. Here in the West you have redundancy. In Poland, even if we employed all our workers, we still wouldn't be able to catch up with the West," indicating that Poland intended to produce its way out of the crisis, not starve its way, as Harvard economics professor Jeffrey Sachs has proposed.

Walesa continues his U.S. trip to New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, the last with a Polish population second only to Warsaw. The powerful organizing of the Schiller Institute and the LaRouche candidates in these areas has created a ferment among Polish-Americans and other layers who are responding to the tremendous events in Poland and East Germany with a surge of cultural optimism not seen for years in this country. A citizenry excited by this "great moment" will see to it that their congressmen and the administration feel the heat in order to get them off the fence while there's still time to bring Poland to the "shore of freedom."